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A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at

O C K I N G H A M,

February the 17th 170⁸.

BEING THE

DAY appointed by AUTHORITY

FOR A

Publick Thanksgiving

FOR THE

Great and Glorious Successes of the last Year.

By G. C.

Upon J E R. IX. 23, 24.

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches.

But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

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A

Thanksgiving Sermon.

JEREMIAH IX. 23, 24.

Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise Man glory in wisdom, neither let the mighty Man glory in his might, let not the rich Man glory in his riches.

But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

THE repeated Instances of the Divine Goodness in giving such signal Successes to our Forces the last Campaign, loudly call for a Tribute of Praise which this Day by the Appointment of the Government we are Assembled to render to him.

The merciful Administrations of Providence have much exceeded our deserts, in some measure have o'reflown our expectations. Our Successes have been great, although our Demeanour has had a large mixture of Ingratitude. GOD has shewn us Mercy when he might have written bitter things against us.

Such favourable Dispensations have a Voice in them, and 'tis the Duty of every one that shares therein, to enquire what it is, that they may not be wanting in their returns to the Author and Donor of them. We are not left to content ourselves with Twilight Conjectures about our Duty. Every one that acknowledges a Providence, must believe himself obliged to ascribe the Glory of our Successes unto GOD. When we reflect upon our large Successes the last Year, methinks the Providence of GOD thus bespeaks us: "I have by my powerful Arm crown'd your Attempts with Success; I have put your Enemies to flight, and have given you the Victory; be not so disingenuous and ingrateful as to forget my engaging Goodness. Behold my Almighty Arm, and ascribe not your

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" Successes

" Successes to your prudent Conduct, singular Valour, or large
 " Magazines, but give the Glory to me who may justly claim
 " it; for I exercise Loving-kindness in giving you the Victory
 " over your Enemies; Judgment upon them, putting them to
 " Confusion; Righteousness in defending your Cause: I de-
 " light in these things.

If our Hearts were truly affected under a Sense of GOD'S Goodness and Mercy, we should be furnished with a System of most excellent Arguments to excite us to the Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving, and should cheerfully give unto the LORD that Glory, which without Sacrilege we cannot withhold or give to another. But tho' we profess to believe that all things are under the Conduct of Infinite Wisdom, that he is the Author of all our Mercies, we are apt to look too much upon Second Causes, and when Success is acquired, give that to the Instruments which is due to GOD alone. To prevent this, I know no properer Antidote than a serious Consideration of these words deliver'd by the Prophet, which I have made choice of to insist upon. *Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise Man glory in his Wisdom, &c.*

This Prophet having received a Commission from the LORD to denounce sore and heavy Judgments against the Jews, in the preceeding Verses, he threatens them with ruin if they continued in their Disobedience: But they disregarded him, and pleas'd 'emselfes with the hopes of Impunity, because of their Policy, Strength, and Riches. To check their carnal Confidence, He delivers this awakening Message, telling them 'twas vain for them to trust in their Wisdom, Strength, and Riches, that these should not deliver them.

It will not much vary the Sense if (with some Commentators) we look upon these words as having no strict connexion with the preceeding Verses. The design of the Text is to shew how hazardous and unsafe it is to trust in Wisdom, Strength, or Riches. And if we must not confide in 'em. There is a parity of Reason why we must not ascribe our Success to, and glory in them.

I will not any longer detain you with what is only prefatory to that which I design from the words, which shall be

First. I. To demonstrate, That it is vain and even irrational to glory in our Wisdom, Strength, and Treasure, and look upon our Successes intirely owing to these.

Secondly. II. That a knowledge of GOD will afford us just reason to Glory in him.

III. I shall



III. *I shall endeavour to shew how he exercises his Loving Kindness, Judgment and Righteousness; and how we must glory under the manifestation thereof.* The Text would furnish me with other Heads of Discourse which Time wont allow me to take Notice of. I shall

Thirdly.

I. Endeavour to demonstrate, That it is vain and even irrational to glory in Wisdom, Strength, or Riches, and look upon our Successes entirely owing to these.

First.

That the Folly of such as glory in them may be clearly expos'd, I shall speak to them distinctly. And

1. Shew how vain it is to glory in Wisdom. When it has such things for its Objects as are truly valuable, it must be reckon'd one of the most noble perfections of Human Nature. The Wise Man calls it the principal thing which we should study to acquire. That Wisdom which consists in the knowledge of the Arts and Sciences is Useful and Commendable, but not a proper Attainment to glory in. If any Persons were able to solve all the *Phænomena's* of Nature, knew the Use and Excellencies of all the minute Parts in the Creation, they would act preposterously if they glory'd in such Attainments. But how apt are they that are furnished with any smatterings of Knowledge to over-value themselves, and condemn all they judge inferiour to 'em in Wisdom, forgetting who it is that makes them to differ, and that they have not any thing but what they received, which should exclude boasting, if the Apostle who was guided by an Infallible Teacher, make a genuine Conclusion. He that has the largest share of Prudence, if he boast of it, gives an infallible sign that there is a large mixture of Folly.

Prov. 4.7

The Knowledge of the most Intelligent Person is so imperfect, that if upon a serious enquiry into his Knowledge, he passes an impartial Judgment upon himself, he'll conclude that he is ignorant of many things, and will be so far from extolling his Wisdom, that he will ingenuously confess he has reason to be humble; but this is difficult; for as an Ingenious worthy Author says, *If we will believe every Man's Judgment of himself, Knowledge is more equally distributed amongst Men than any thing else, for every one thinks himself furnished with a competent Stock, and believes whatever others excel him in they are not superior in that.* This is evident, in that Persons will bear a Reflection upon any thing more calmly than their Intellects, when different degrees of Knowledge are very manifest. But alas, how imperfect are the best of them, when compared with the pure Rays of Divine Wisdom and Knowledge! To draw a Comparison is the way to lessen the distance, being as great as betwixt finite and infinite. Suppose a Person with the most intense applica-
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Bp. Stillfleet.

tion of his Mind to the quest of Knowledge, should arrive at a more excellent stature, his Wisdom after all is so imperfect that he has no reason to glory in it. I have read of one that boasted of three things which he said he should never be deprived of: One was, his Knowledge and Learning, which from that instant began to wither; his exquisite Parts were in a short space so confus'd, that he could not think or speak pertinently to any concern.

Some Persons may judge an united Wisdom more secure, and that in the multitude of Counsel there is so much safety, that all fears of danger may justly be removed, and without fear they may confide in this. Would opportunity serve, I might shew how many deep laid Projects have been frustrated, how often such as thought 'emselfes the greatest Politicians have seen all their Contrivances ineffectual. And blessed be GOD that has shewn them they are but Men. Some sudden and surprizing turns of Providence have given full proof of the Fallibility of Human Judgments, and our Affairs have succeeded well in a way we had not contrived. But suppose that Matters fall exactly in the Line we fram'd in our Judgments, and all our Counsels be succeeded with Victory, 'tis vain to glory in this, because Wisdom is his Gift, and his kind Providence raises up such adequate and worthy Instruments: So when we glory in this, and neglect to look higher, we take the most effectual method to provoke GOD, and cause him to blast our Endeavours. He may say with a just indignation against such preposterous actings; *I will destroy the Wisdom of the Wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Let not the Wise Man glory in his Wisdom, for his Counsels are but foolishness, if the Almighty resolve to disappoint them, when he says, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass:* In vain do they employ themselves in laying deep Counsels and Designs, and he that takes the Wise in their own craftiness, can with a word also consume their Strength: Which leads me to shew

Cor. 1.
9.

2. How vain it is to glory in Strength or Power. But how natural is it for Persons to boast of this, as tho' they were a match for Omnipotency, and could not be foil'd by his powerful Arm; they judge it one of the most noble Perfections of Humane Nature, and glory in it as if it were invincible, and what they had the most secure Title to. How often has a Neighbouring Prince (that would willingly swallow up all the Kingdoms around him to make himself an Universal Monarch) boasted of his Invincible Power? But Glory be to GOD that has given a Check to his Fury and Ambition: We hope for the time when *the Terrible one shall be brought to nought, the Scorned consumed, and they that watch for Iniquity be cut off.* Let us not glory in our Strength, and ascribe our Victories to that. Our Power may by a Thousand accidents be chang'd into Weakness.

1. 29. 20.

How

How often have we seen a hale robust Constitution quickly made an Hospital of Crazes and Distempers, and he that a few days ago glory'd in his Strength become a burden to himself! Life is but a Vapour: What then is the Strength and Power of it which sometimes takes its leave before the Glass be half run? The malignant Influences of the Air bring it to a decay as easily as the Spring Frosts cut off the budding hopes of a large Encrease: And he that takes away thus suddenly the Vigour of one Individual, can as easily do it from a Million, since our Breath is in his Hands. Suppose we could Job 12.10. enjoy as great a measure of Strength as we can wish for, and had it secured by the firmest Title for a Hundred Years, it would be Folly to glory in it, because we must yield at last to that pale Conqueror Death; And what would it avail a Person to have his Dust lie under this Inscription? Here was Interr'd a Person of singular Valour. The united Power of an Army is not more sufficient to support us from being guilty of Folly, if we glory in it. This is not exempted from the many Accidents which may cast a damp upon the most brave Heroick Spirits. Holy David says, *It is vain to put confidence in Princes.* Men of the greatest Courage may on a sudden be so disanimated, that an inconsiderable number may put them to flight. I need not refer you to any other Instances than the late Glorious Revolution, which gave a Convincing Proof of the Truth of that Saying of the Wise Man, *That the Battel is not to the strong.* We Eccles. 9. have remarkable Instances that bear a later date, wherein the Divine Power and Goodness were wonderfully display'd; We 11. thankfully acknowledge his Mercy, and still put our Confidence in him. For *through God we shall do valiantly: he it is that shall tread down our Enemies.* If their Strength were much superior Ps. 60. 12. we need not be dejected, *We will wait upon his Strength who is our Defence;* for this shall be a sure and constant Safeguard, *Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is Everlasting Strength.* And as it is Vain and Irrational to Glory Psal. 59. 9. in Wisdom or Strength, It is altogether as inexcusable. Isa. 26. 4.

3. To glory in our Riches or Treasures. Wealth is an Idol which the generality of Persons are apt to glory in, forgetting, That such as the Providence of GOD has made Stewards of a large portion of the Earth, must be accountable for it. Contrary to this, many act as if it gave them a Right to contemn all such as are their Inferiours in Estate, and brow-beat those that are not entrusted with such large Possessions.

The eager and too frequently unlawful Desires of being rich prove, how much Persons overvalue these things, and how prone they are to glory in them. They consume their Days and Strength as if the felicity of Life consisted only in a large and fair Estate, which if they are so prosperous to acquire, tho' they

they be Men of the most sordid Minds, and enjoy as little of it as those that at a distance behold their Folly, they think 'em-felves the only happy Men, and willingly part with the reversal of a glorious Inheritance for what they never reap any measure of Satisfaction from: Or if they use their Possessions after a more generous manner, and take a moderate draught of Pleasure from these Streams, it must appear to be egregious Folly to glory in them, to any Man that so far makes use of his Reason as impartially to meditate upon the Vanity and Inconstancy thereof. He that has the largest Possessions may in a little Space by a Thousand Accidents be deprived of all: The Administrations of Providence are attended with various Vicissitudes. How many have on a sudden been rais'd to a very prosperous State, when the next Scene has been fill'd with various Calamities; sometimes loaded with Honour, anon in the mire of Disgrace: Few but have some experience of the mutable State of present Enjoyments. Let us not glory in what is so inconstant; frequently whilst we are doting upon them they dye and wither in our Hands. *Set not thine heart upon that which is not; for Riches make themselves wings and fly as an Eagle towards Heaven.* Why should we be so excessively fond of them, or place so much confidence in 'em; for being so transitory, it's probable, they may fail us when we rely most upon them, or stand in most need of their assistance.

Prov. 23.
5.

Neither is it a sufficient excuse for our Folly, to glory in the united Riches and Treasures of a Nation; we have no Lease of them, they are entirely dependent upon the Sovereign Pleasure of their Donour. To place our confidence in gold, or to say *to the fine gold, Thou art our hope*, is an Indignity of the highest rank cast upon our Maker, and justly provokes him to deprive us of all. Let's thankfully adore him for our Treasure, and if we find any signal Advantages attending it (as there certainly are) it's our Duty to *give unto the Lord the Glory due unto his Name*. Let us eye his Hand in all our Mercies, and endeavour to learn something of GOD in these Merciful Administrations of Providence; the more we see of his Arm, the more thankful shall we be. Which leads me to a second Head,

Job 31.
24, 25.

II. That a Knowledge of GOD, will afford us just reason to glory in him. *But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord.* The Prophet makes use of two Words to express the same thing, denoting the necessity of a Knowledge of GOD, which must not be a meer speculative Knowledge, or a consent to this Truth, That there is a GOD; but a Knowledge of his Nature and Perfections. That he is the Universal Sovereign, who disposes of all Events according to the Counsel of his own Will; that he superintends all Affairs, and directs them to such wise and good Ends as his Infinite Wis-

Wisdom sees most convenient; and that his Power is such as none can resist. Such a Knowledge of him as this, will convince us how reasonable it is we should put our Trust in him. And he that thus understands him will certainly do it: It will beget suitable Affections and Dispositions of Mind, and teach us to *give unto the Lord the Glory that is his due*: It will raise a holy Fear and Reverence to him; And a consideration of his Goodness to us, will tend to excite us to a regular discharge of the Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving. But I shall speak of this more particularly, and shew how a Knowledge of the Divine Perfections, will give us just reason to glory in G O D. And

A knowledge of his All-sufficiency, will convince us, That 'tis necessary to own our Dependence upon him, and give him the Glory of all our Mercies. By his All-powerful *Fiat*, He brought this World into Being; the continuance of his Power and Goodness, supports that Order and Harmony which is in the Creation: When he speaks the Word, it shall certainly come to pass; and Humane Power is not able to make the least resistance. *The weakness of God is stronger than Men.* What his Wisdom sees necessary and convenient, his Power can immediately effect. He is Infinite in all his Perfections; contains in himself whatever is Good, Lovely or Excellent, all that is requisite to the completing of a most Sovereign Perfect Being. He is not confin'd in any Place (with reverence be it spoken) so as to be render'd incapable of regarding the Necessities of such as are at a distance from it; neither does the imparting of his Favour to any Person exhaust his Fulness, so as to cut off the Hopes of another from tasting the Fruits of his Loving-kindness; He is a Sun and a Shield, as diffusive of his Goodness as the Sun is of its Light; He will not withhold what is good from them that wait upon him; He has both Wisdom to contrive, and Power to effect the Happiness of his Servants; and so far as He sees convenient, to defend them from all present Molestations. The choice which *David* made upon such Considerations as these is the most reasonable and advantageous, *whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth, that I desire besides thee.* *God is the strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever.* We may have, if we make our sincere Applications to him, the like Interest in him; He is the same, and changes not. He can as easily crush to pieces the Enemies of his Church now, as he did in former Ages; *his Ear is not heavy that he cannot hear, neither is his Arm shortened that he cannot save.* For,

His Power is Infinite: The consideration whereof, will afford us just reason to glory in him; He does as he pleases to the *Inhabitants of the Earth*; if thou speak of Strength, he is strong: he *leadeth Counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the Judges Fools*; he

leadeth Princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty. He that knows and understands such a Being, will confide and glory in him. If he be our Defence, we may laugh at the Menaces of our proud and haughty Foes; but need not be discouraged at their Boasting. That experience which late Years has furnished us with, may raise in our Minds a lively sense of GOD's Omnipotency, and engage us still to depend upon him. How has He disappointed the Counsels, and laid waste the horrid malicious Designs of our Enemies. If we turn back to the last Spring, it presents to our view a deep laid Project to create intestine Wars and Animosities by sending a Pretender to invade our Rights and Privileges, and promote the Interest of *France*. Whatever favourable Thoughts some might have of it, how far they might be deceived by specious Pretences, certainly every loyal Subject that has the least concern for the true Interest of the Nation, needs no Arguments to persuade him, that the Civil and Religious Liberties of *Great Britain* were directly struck at. He was encouraged to do this by some disaffected malevolent persons within us which heightn'd the danger. I'll borrow the Expression of an ingenious Author upon this Subject, "That Monarch, the King of *France*, after he had sustained so great a Loss as almost the routing of the most flourishing part of his Army, would never have attempted to send that Tool, the Pretender, without large Encouragement from some considerable Number here at home; 'tis inconsistent with the Practices of such an Old Politician. How wonderful was the Goodness of GOD in disappointing the Project! The Mercy was more signal than the generality of Persons imagine; This was the LORD's doing, and a lively affectionate sense of his Love ought to be firmly engraven upon the Minds of every zealous Protestant. I esteem'd the Mercy to be such, as this Day deserv'd a recognition. Let him have the Praises, who discovered and disappointed the Designs of our Enemies. Also,

A knowledge of his Omniscieny, affords us just reason to glory in him. He being the Author of all Things, may reasonably be supposed to have a full and perfect knowledge of their Natures: We can't form exact Ideas of the pure Rays of Divine Knowledge and Wisdom, because we cannot find out the Almighty to perfection; yet may justly conclude, that it is so, and from it deduce such Truths as will be advantagious. He is acquainted with all our Exigencies, and knows how to afford us suitable Supplies. He sees all the Designs that (his and) the Church's Enemies do lay against it, and knows when to interpose his Assistance so as to display his Goodness, and make the Deliverance truly acceptable. He sees the Counsels of wicked Politicians, and knows how to deliver them that are his. Let us with a grateful sense of his Goodness for past Mercies,

put

put up our Requests with Fervency and Humility for the continuance of his Assistance; his Knowledge is Infinite, and therefore should we look unto him. Let us study to know and understand the L O R D; then shall we confide in him, and give him that Praise which he justly claims at our Hands. Which leads me to the

Third and last Thing, I propos'd to speak to; viz. How GOD exercises his Loving-kindness, Judgment and Righteousness; and how we must glory under the manifestation thereof.

In the Sacred Volumes, how often has he declared himself *Long-suffering, abundant in Goodness and Loving-kindness!* Mercy is his darling Attribute: He takes a peculiar Pleasure in the manifestation of that to the Children of Men, and *Judgment is his strange Work.* When the Crimes of a People call for Judgments, what various Methods does he take to reclaim 'em before he inflicts the Punishment; and when their Sins dare him to punish 'em and force him (if I may so speak) to vindicate his own Honour, how does he expostulate the case with 'em, *Why should ye be stricken any more? return unto me, and I will heal you.* How did he deal with *Israel* of old, when they provoked him with their *strange Gods*? He was angry with them, and yet wooes and intreats 'em to return unto him, promises to *blot out their Transgressions*, and shew his *Loving-kindness* to them. Afterwards may furnish us with remarkable Instances of Goodness and Mercy, without being at the trouble of turning over our ancient historical Accounts. We have seen G O D exercising his *Loving-kindness*, and ourselves have been sharers in the Mercy. I need not turn back any further than the last Year, to give you a Scheme of the Divine Goodness and Mercy, where you may see such lively Instances of it as will fully confirm this Truth, That the LORD delights to exercise *Loving-kindness, Judgment, and Righteousness in the Earth.* And here I may not omit that Mercy for which a Day of Thanksgiving was by Authority appointed, *viz. The Victory obtain'd over the French near Audenarde;* where our valiant Commanders and Soldiers acted with almost an unparallel'd Courage and Magnanimity, every way becoming Persons that had a just concern for the Interest of *Britain*, and knew how to set a value upon its Rights and Privileges: When they had dispers'd the Army, they did not neglect to improve the Victory; but with Vigour and Resolution pursued the disanimated Foes until the nocturnal Shades beat a Parley for 'em, and invited these Martial Spirits to regard themselves, and not so long to shew their Courage and Resolution as at once to cut off the Hopes of their future Service. Such worthy Instruments in the Almighty's Hand deserve their due Praises, and grateful Respects from every loyal

Subject: How base and disingenuous is it for Persons to reflect upon such Worthies, who for the good of their Country expose themselves to so many Hardships and Dangers. Blessed be GOD that has rais'd up Persons of such singular Prudence and Valour, to Check the Pride and Ambition of our Foes; and Glory be to him who crowns their Attempts with Success.

This was seconded with a great Undertaking, The laying Siege against *Lisle*, a Place so strongly fortified as to be stiled *invincible*, by those that place their Confidence in regular Troops, large Treasures, strong Walls, and the like. We found the Difficulties greater than we expected; it was thought by some it would be in our Hands within twelve or fourteen Days after the opening of the Trenches; but such Persons forgot that it cost the King of *France* much more, when the Fortifications were not so regular; The Place being of so great Consequence, we might be confident they would defend it with the utmost resolution and vigour, which must be acknowledged they did. How resolute and courageous were these Martial Spirits when engag'd in so tedious a piece of Service, as this Siege? The long continuance did not seem to disanimate, but rather increas'd their Magnanimity.

The Vigilancy and prudent Conduct of those that were Guards to the Convoy (upon which the success of the Siege depended) is worthy of our notice, particularly, that honourable and worthy Action of Major General *Webb*, when our Convoy from the Confederate Army was attack'd by Count *La Mothe*, he demonstrated his Prudence and Valour, in putting a stop to their Passage whilst the Waggons were gone, and he drew up his Troops in order of Battle to engage the Enemy, where the *French*, with a considerable Loss, were put to flight; and the Convoy arriv'd safe at the Camp, which gave a good step towards the taking of the Town, and the Cittadel was some time after delivered into the Hands of the Besiegers: This was a signal Instance of the Divine Goodness, for which we should be truly grateful.

I cannot pass over in silence the reducing of *Ghent* and *Bruges*, thro' Treachery delivered up unto our Enemies in the beginning of this Glorious Campaign. Here our great and valiant Commander, the Duke of *Marlborough*, again signalized his Zeal and Concern for the good of his Country, in undertaking this after so long and tedious a Campaign. That Noble Prince whose Courage is signal, and whose Attempts have frequently been successful, Prince *Eugene*, has acted a part for which he deserves a grateful Return: The Divine Providence shewed a singular care to him in alleviating that stroke by a Musket-bullet which slightly wounded his Head without great damage. There are other Successes worthy of our notice, which I may not take a

view

view of, lest the length should render me tedious, The taking of *Port Mohun*, was a Mercy which we should be grateful for, hoping it may be advantageous to us. In a word, our Successes the last Year were signal, and we are obliged to be thankful; GOD has manifested his Loving-kindness to us, shewn his Judgment upon our Enemies; they are much dis-animated, as appear'd by their quitting their Lines by the *Scheld*, when we rais'd the Siege against *Brussels*, we hope the LORD is on our Side, our Cause is just and good, such as we may reasonably hope for a Blessing upon, if our Impieties intercept it not. But when we consider what Returns we have made for former Mercies, our Ingratitude gives us too great reason to fear GOD may deny the continuance of his Favour and Goodness to us; For instead of keeping up a lively sense of his Loving-kindness, we have buried our Mercies in Oblivion, and by our gross Immoralities affronted the Author of our Blessings. Every publick Mercy calls for Reformation; had our progress in that kept pace with our Mercies, Immorality by this time would have lost the Advantage of having so large a number of Presidents; whereas (with grief I may speak) instead of losing, it has gain'd ground, and there is too great probability will maintain it, whilst it has so firm a Support as the Example of Persons of Dignity, and such to countenance it, by neglecting to put in execution the excellent Laws that are made against it. Whilst Prophaneness continues to be so rampant, we do but flatter ourselves when we talk of our Safety. Sin is the destruction of a People, and in the ordinary Course of Providence brings Punishment; this we see verified towards the *Jewish Nation*, tho' they were a peculiar People of GOD, and highly blessed; yet for their Iniquities were severely punished, and at last destroyed. I might bring in various Instances from *Prophane History*, to shew how many Nations were destroyed for their Sins: I wish, we may not too clearly be charged with Pride, Luxury, &c. and that the Forbearance and Long-suffering of GOD may lead us to Repentance: We have had various Instances of his Loving-kindness.

Before I conclude this Head, I shall briefly shew what is our Duty; how we must give Glory to GOD.

Our Returns of Gratitude too frequently sink into Formality; our Days of Thanksgiving are commonly fill'd up with large Harrangues of our Policy, Strength and Riches; and uncommon liberty taken for Persons to indulge themselves in Intemperance; as if Gratitude only consisted in a cheerful Air, and pleasant Discourses about our Victories, and drinking briskly to the Success (as they term it) of the next Campaign. To express our Joy and Thankfulness by external Signs is very convenient, if we do not pretermitt what is the proper Work of the Day; which should be,

1. To

1. To study to see the Hand of GOD in our Mercies, and ascribe the Glory unto him: All Affairs are under the Conduct of his Infinite Wisdom, he disposes of all Events as shall be most conducive to the promoting of his own Honour and Glory: Sometimes his Proceedings are Extraordinary, and Signal Deliverances are effected in a Method contrary to our expectations. We can't then ascribe them to any other than his kind Providence; and when they are visibly wrought by the mediation of Second Causes, it is our Duty still to give GOD the Glory, because he raises up proper Instruments for the effecting what he has Pre-determined. We have Prudent and Valiant Commanders that highly deserve our returns of Gratitude. To be confident we shall be successful, because this or the other brave General has the Super-intendency is very preposterous, and we take a proper Method to meet with a Disappointment. It has been observed by some, that when we have been the most confident our Success has fall'n much short of our Expectations. It is GOD that fights our Battels for us, and therefore should he have the Glory of our Victories. *Unto thee, O my strength will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy. If he deny his Assistance, we shall quickly be convinc'd our Strength is but Weakness. Holy David had a lively sense of this, when he breaks out into that pious Exultation, I have pursued mine Enemies, and destroyed them: and turned not again untill I had consumed them. And I have consumed them, and wounded them, that they could not arise: yea, they are fallen under my feet. For thou hast girded me with strength to Battel: them that rose up against me, hast thou subdued under me, &c.*

al. lix.
am.
ii. cha.
39.

2. We must endeavour to have our Hearts fill'd with a Joy and Chearfulness answerable to our Mercies. The Parable of the Ten Lepers is too lively a Draught of Mankind; there was but One that return'd to give Thanks to GOD for that signal Mercy. And how few that rightly perform that excellent Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving? When we are expos'd to Danger, we importunately seek to be delivered; but when the Mercy is obtain'd, the sense of it is quickly gone, and too frequently we look no higher than the Instruments by which 'tis convey'd to us. A Tribute of Praise is that which he expects; let us study to have our Minds rightly affected under a sense of his distinguishing Goodness, and express our Gratitude after a lively, decent manner.

3. Let us Study to be so affected under a Sense of GOD's Mercy and Loving-kindness, as that it may have this good effect upon us to lead us, to true Repentance and Reformation.

This

This will be the best improvement we can make of our Mercies, and we cannot in any thing after a more lively manner give Glory to GOD. We may now thus reason with our selves; GOD has been expressive of his Love after a signal and indearing manner; What Returns shall we make to the Almighty? We must be very ingrateful, and guilty of the most disingenuous Demeanour, if we live in the open or secret violation of his Law. The National Sins committed after the receipt of such Publick Mercies are of a Crimson Dye. Let us all endeavour in our respective Stations to give Glory to GOD, by endeavouring to stop the Current of Sin, by disallowing it in ourselves, and as far as we may discountenancing it in others. When the Goodness of GOD engages us to a more holy and exact walking, we may comfortably hope for the continuance of his Mercies. And

4. The Mercies we have received should engage us still to put our Trust and Confidence in him; He is always a proper Object for us to repose our Confidence in, because Immutable, but especially when we have had such large experience of his Mercy, we have reason to confide in him; He who has frequently deliver'd us, will if we trust in him still appear for us, and shew us his Salvation. Our Foes boast of their Strength and Power, but we'll remember in whose Hands they are, and humbly invoke his Assistance.

The Improvement I shall make of what has been deliver'd shall be in this Exhortation.

The Goodness and Mercy of GOD has been wonderfully discover'd to us; that Scripture seems to be verify'd to us, *A Land which the Lord thy God hath delighted to dwell in: The eyes of the Lord are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.* We have had long Experience of the Loving-kindness of GOD. Our Affairs now have a good Prospect; We have an Excellent Gracious QUEEN (whom GOD long preserve) that shews a Pious Care for the Welfare of the Kingdom; there has been a pleasant Band of Amity encompassing of late Years, our Representatives in Parliament, a good accord betwixt the QUEEN and them; our Enemies have been often disappointed in their Enterprises. What is our Duty under the enjoyment of such Blessings, but to render Thanks to Almighty GOD for such unmerited Favours? Be exhorted to call upon your Souls to bless his Holy Name. Forget not his Loving-kindness, but loudly proclaim his Acts of Mercy; Let him that crowns your Years with various Blessings have your unfeigned Praises. Ascribe not that Glory to another which is due

to GOD alone. Do not confide in what is unable to relieve you, but put your Trust in the LORD JEHOVAH; in him is Everlasting Strength, and He it is that shall tread down our Enemies. Let us fervently beseech him to go forth with our Hosts this Spring, and fight our Battels for us. We have such experience of his Goodness as may engage us to confide in him.

To Conclude, Let us study to keep up a lively sense of his Goodness and Mercy, for certainly it is highly offensive to bury our Mercies in oblivion, and may justly provoke GOD to give us convincing proofs of their Excellency, by inflicting his Judgments upon us. Ingratitude has often reduced a flourishing People into a calamitous State: Therefore give unto the Lord the glory due unto his Name, and let all the People that share in his Mercy say, *Amen.*



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